

REMARKS

Independent claims 1 and 10 are amended to recite where the stream of nitrogen-rich gas is fed. As amended, this stream is fed into said means for feeding secondary air into said combustion device.

Claims 1-20 were objected to because independent claims 1 and 10, from which the other objected-to claims depend, contained the phrase "...where said fuel emerges into from said burner...". This objection has been overcome because the phrase has been removed from the claims.

The drawings were objected to for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In response to this objection, a new Figure 2a is submitted herewith, and the specification has been amended to describe this Figure 2a without adding new matter.

Figure 2a is identical to Figure 2 except that Figure 2a also includes stream 34 (being the stream 34 that originates in unit 30, as shown in Figure 1) which feeds into the port to which secondary air 15 is fed.

The Office Action, on Page 3 beginning on the third line, identified several features of the invention recited in claims 1 and 10, that needed to be shown in the drawings. Of these features, it is believed that only the feature of feeding the stream of nitrogen-enriched gas "into said means for feeding secondary air into said combustion" device remains in claims 1 and 10 as those have been amended herein.

Accordingly, new Figure 2a shows stream 34 being fed into the point where secondary air 15 is fed so that is fed

into the combustion device. It is believed that no other drawings are needed in order to overcome the objection to the drawings, because of what has been deleted from claims 1 and 10 in the present amendments.

The specification has been amended in paragraph 0040, to add a reference to Figure 2a, and in paragraph 0051, to describe what is shown in Figure 2a. Paragraph 0040 is also amended to refer to Figure 1, so that the overall paragraph distinguishes between Figures 1 and 2a.

Claims 1-7, 9-16, 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious from U.S Patent No. 4,586,443 ("Burge") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,282,901 ("Marin"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action argues that Burge discloses adding nitrogen to the air stream with which the fuel is mixed before the fuel is fed to the combustor, and that the rejected claims recited that the nitrogen-enriched stream could be fed to the "primary air".

The amendments herein to claims 1 and 10 distinguish this teaching of Burge by deleting the feature that the nitrogen-enriched stream could be fed into the primary air.

Now, as amended, claims 1 and 10 (and all claims dependent therefrom) recite that the nitrogen-enriched stream is fed to the means for feeding secondary air into the combustion device.

Burge and Marin do not suggest such a feature. The unobviousness of applicant's feature as now claimed is strengthened by noting that Burge's addition of nitrogen to the fuel could be for purposes of "inerting" the coal, to

inhibit premature combustion, whereas applicant's feature of feeding the nitrogen-enriched stream at the secondary air would not be suggested for that purpose.

Since neither Burge nor Marin discloses or suggests a feature that is required by applicants' amended claims 1-20 (specifically feeding the nitrogen-enriched stream to the means for feeding the secondary air), it follows that claim

The rejection of claims 8 and 17 based on Burge in view of Marin and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,257,763 ("Reed"), and the rejection of claim 19 based on Burge in view of Marin and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,809,910 ("Svensson") are also overcome for the same reasons.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that pending claims 1-20 as amended can and should be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald T. Black
PTO Reg. No. 27,999
Attorney for Applicants

Praxair, Inc.
39 Old Ridgebury Rd.
Danbury, CT 06810
(203) 837-2669
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